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**“RESEARCH INTO RESEARCH”.
THE RESEARCH OF THE SEKTION RASSEN-
UND VOLKSTUMSFORSCHUNG INSTITUT
FÜR DEUTSCHE OSTARBEIT IN KOMAŃCZA**

**SEKTION RASSEN- UND VOLKSTUMSFORSCHUNG
IDO IN KOMAŃCZA**

The research conducted by the Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung covered the Lemko region in the Low Beskid mountain range (Komańcza, Hańczowa, Nowa Wieś) and the adjacent terrains of the Jasło-Sanok Basin (i.a. Nowotaniec, Besko, Czerteż, Haczów).¹ It was conducted by a team of

¹ In addition to the detailed research described below that was conducted in Komańcza and among the Komańcza people in Ukraine we visited also Nowotaniec and its vicinity (2011) and Haczów and Hańczowa (2013). Unlike the material from Komańcza, the material left by the SRV IDO from the research conducted in the other villages also included photographs, which greatly facilitated our work focused on evoking memories. In Hańczowa the three oldest women who remembered the German research recognized many people photographed by the commission, including members of their own families. The interviewees suggested that the choice of Hańczowa was made in Uście Gorlickie, where Hańczowa was to be indicated to the Germans by the village head as a progressive village, whose inhabitants were known for their economy. One of the women, born in 1925, remembers that people over the age of 20 were examined, hair samples were taken and placed in envelopes, teeth were checked, the distance between eyes was measured. Although, as we were told, Hańczowa inhabitants did not know the purpose of the study, the interlocutors remember that blue-eyed blondes were being sought. However, we did not learn what fate awaited the selected people. In their memory remained an image of the village inhabitants gathered near the school, who were later summoned one by one for research. In the improvised “corner” there were doctors, among them a woman, who had previously been seen by the inhabitants in an Orthodox church in the service of God. In the vicinity of Nowotaniec we conducted 10 conversations in four neighbouring villages: Nowotaniec itself and Nagórzany, Wola Sękowa and Nadolany. We arrived there with a photograph

anthropologists from the Department of Ethnology. The SRV conducted large-scale actions of anthropological measurements and medical examinations. The research of Komańcza inhabitants was aimed at searching for traces of Germanness and conducting a census of races living in the territory of the Generalgouvernement.² the work of the commission consisted of “measuring and describing people”, medical and psychotechnical examinations, filling in sociological questionnaires.³

The Department of Ethnology worked in Komańcza in the autumn of 1942, leaving behind the following documentation: anthropological, sociological, psychological, medical-racial, medical questionnaires and skull outlines.⁴ Separate lists containing names (handwritten: 275 names and two typescripts: 71 and 249 surnames) listed all the examined subjects.

When we started processing the material, we first dealt with Komańcza⁵ – ethnographically a Lemko village located in the Oława valley, at the junction of the Bieszczady and Beskid Niski mountain ranges, whose inhabitants – as the events of 1918–1919 (Moklak 1997; Horbal 1997) had already shown – identified themselves strongly with the Ukrainian nation. Today, the town is still inhabited by many Lemko families, both those who escaped the displacements of 1944–1947⁶ and those who returned to the village after 1956.

taken in front of the local church by the SRV IDO in 1940. Two local people were recognized in the collective picture, but the interlocutors did not remember any other activity of the Germans in the area than military and police activity. In Haczów, in turn, we managed to reach a person who remembered the proceedings of the SRV IDO research. They were to take place for a long time (not as a one-off action), involving people with Germanic names and appropriate physiognomy, and their aim was to confirm the German genealogy of the villagers, although the interviewee pointed out that those were the assumptions at the time, and not the goal of research officially announced to the villagers. He stressed that the respondents were treated very courteously, but remembered that the young blondes were afraid that they would be taken to Germany. He talked about taking pictures, but he also mentioned blood tests and measurements of “facial features”. The photos were to be taken at the school, although he also said that the research was carried out in the “vicinity of the municipal office”. The knowledge gained from conversations in those villages enabled generalisations leading to the determination of the principal goal of German activity. The research on memory of the SRV IDO activity has not been completed yet.

² A document without a heading discussing the achievements of the SRV and the plans for 1944. Typed manuscript, 10 pp., no date or author, A UJ IDO Box 01/01/14.

³ *Sprawozdanie nr: 1 z prac a działalności sekcji antropologiczno-etnograficznej Instytutu wschodniego./Sektion Rassen- u. Volkstumsforschung/ [za okres 1 a 1942–31 XII 1943]* (Work and Activity Report No. 1 of the Anthropological and Ethnographic Section of the Eastern Institute/*Sektion Rassen- u. Volkstumsforschung/*[for the 1 a 1942–31 XII 1943 period]); Bałuk-Ulewiczowa 2004: 91.

⁴ Nomenclature given by the Archives of the IEiAK UJ.

⁵ Research on other villages in the Lemko Region has been planned.

⁶ After the end of World War II, under the agreement on the population exchange between Poland and the USSR of September 9, 1944, in the years 1944–1946 Polish citizens of Ukrainian nationality

The specificity of the IDO research in Komańcza, covering people between 20 and 60 years of age, has an impact on today's research on the activities of the Hitlerite commission. The youngest people who were examined then were 87 years old in 2009, which means that we could only reach a few. During our research we used two types of surveys: anthropological and sociological. Apart from medical data, the questionnaire forms, prepared and completed in German, contain identification certificates of the subjects: name, surname, date of birth (usually only the year), nationality, mother tongue, religion, profession, place of birth and residence, citizenship and number of children, with an additional division into sons and daughters, both living and deceased.

Sociological questionnaires, although preserved in a small number, provide interesting data on the property of the Komańcza residents, especially on the functioning of the farms, their mechanisation, the specificity of cultivation and breeding, and the state of ownership. They are filled in in German, but the form is bilingual (also in Polish). Today, it is difficult to determine how the data was collected (which will be discussed later in this article), as even the assessment of the condition of a household and a residential building (described as "good" in all the available questionnaires) could be based either on the declaration of the owner himself or on the observations of the commission. As regards the identification of the subjects, an additional indication for men was the question about the performed military service with the indication of the army and the military rank, and for women the question of the maiden name. Apart from that, the researchers were interested in their travels and knowledge of foreign languages (which is not surprising, given the scale of economic emigration and re-emigration), education and even interests (in this case "agriculture" was invariably entered).

The first stage of our research was our own organisation of the German documentation for the purpose of field research. We started by putting together the three lists, the hand-written one and the typed ones, both types of questionnaires, and noted down the discrepancies. One of the typescripts, dated October 13, 1942, contains 71 names of persons aged between 20 and 50 and do not correspond in full to the other lists. It also shows the names of people whose documentation has not been preserved in the set of questionnaires, so when preparing our own table, we omitted this data. Among these seventy, mostly Ukrainian names, there are also several Polish names.

(including Lemkos) were displaced to Soviet Ukraine. As part of the "Vistula" action carried out in 1947, the remaining Ukrainians (including Lemkos) in Poland were deported to the western and northern territories of Poland. For more on the displacements in Komańcza and their consequences see below.

Both typed lists contain a handwritten indication (✓) of persons who were subjected to the tests. The list, which is made up of three smaller lists and contains a total of 249 names, is dated in hand: “15.X.42”, “16.X.42”, “17.X.1942”, “18.X” and also contains information in Polish: “brak 1” (1 missing), “brak 30” (30 missing) at the end of the list comprising 70 names. It follows that such a number of people were or were to be examined daily. Further names were also added in hand, but one may suppose that this was done by someone who spoke Polish, because he did not make any mistakes in the spelling of the names, contrary to the handwritten letter, which was written partly by, as one might suppose, a German. The latter is evidenced by the characteristic Slavic diphthongs, written as “sch”, “tsch”. In that list, the various passages are written in different characters. In total, the list consists of 275 names together with the anthropological questionnaire numbers, house numbers and the letter “F” placed next to most of the names. Sometimes the names on the lists were written with errors or in two different versions, for example “Boiwka” (it is pronounced by Ukrainians as “Boilka” [Boilka]) and “Bojuka”. Finding out the correct version required verification with the documents from German research, and often also took place during interviews in Komańcza.

In the initial stage of the research (trips to Komańcza) we did not have any photographs, although it was known that they were taken.⁷ Later, before our departure to Ukraine, we received a file of photographs, mistakenly classified as coming from the Podhale region. However, the presentation of the photographs to the former inhabitants of Komańcza who lived in Ukraine did not bring anything – they did not recognize anyone, nor could they determine whether the photographs came from their villages.

We constructed a working alphabetical table – the list of the examined – grouping the surveyed persons by names and, where possible, trying to identify families already at the stage of document analysis. We considered a couple with an identical number of children of similar age to be a potential marriage; the house number was less helpful, as this information seemed to have been affected by numerous mistakes, and the informants themselves were most often unable to provide the number that their house had in 1942. The method, although not ideal, proved to be very helpful during the interviews, allowing to quickly track the genealogy and coligations of many people. We constructed the table with older people in mind, who would like to look at it

⁷ During the commission's work in Komańcza, no full photographic material was collected; it was later sent to Komańcza by a Polish IDO employee, Adam Jarzębiński (Bałuk-Ulewiczowa 2004: 90) to be supplemented.

themselves during the conversation, so we highlighted their name (taking into account the German transcription of Slavic names, resulting in differences between individual documents), year of birth, number of children. This allowed our informers to easily read important data – they were not distracted by the questionnaire numbers and other secondary information the questionnaires contained. In each conversation we started with the name of a person on the IDO list (or asked for the names of parents, grandparents, relatives of the interlocutor, year of birth or number of children of the person), then we presented the list or the appropriate questionnaire, which allowed us to reduce our suggestions as much as possible.

It was the number of children, both living in the autumn of 1942 and those who had died earlier, that often proved to be an important hint enabling identification, especially when the same name and surname were present in several people. Interestingly, many of our interlocutors were able to name children, including those who died before 1942, with reference not only to their own ancestors and relatives, but also to their neighbours. The place of birth of the examined person also turned out to be helpful, if – in only a few cases – it was not Komańcza. The marital status entered in the German table also turned out to be important, and the fate of “an unwed mother” was particularly vivid in the memory of the Komańcza inhabitants. Categories such as the mother tongue, nationality or profession essentially did not provide any hint to us due to the clear dominance of the same entries (only in individual cases was the nationality given other than Ukrainian, the mother tongue other than Ukrainian, the religion other than Greek Catholic, and occupation other than a farmer⁸). Very few subjects were born outside Komańcza, which definitely facilitated their identification. The place of residence indicated in the German questionnaire – in all cases it was Komańcza – confirms that the research was carried out only in that village, thus it did not include the surrounding settlements nor their inhabitants. For our interviewees, sociological questionnaires turned out to be much more interesting than the anthropological questionnaires. Although the anthropological questionnaires were of sentimental value to most of them because of the personal data about their loved ones, their parents and grandparents, the inability to

⁸ The author of the aforementioned report prepared for the Polish underground provided additional commentary on the knowledge gained from the questionnaires: “People claim to be Ukrainians, but they are not nationalists. In general, they do not have a stable political direction, they are completely passive” (Bałuk-Ulewiczowa 2004: 90). In contrast to the previous research carried out in Hańczowa, the authenticity of declarations was taken into account, without allowing any external pressure, for example from the clergy.

understand its parts, containing only coded medical data, caused some disappointment. Sociological questionnaires, on the other hand, referring to real objects and goods (condition of the farms, property, etc.) attracted more interest. Of course, the most valuable for our interlocutors would be the unknown photographs of their loved ones, seen after many years, as a particularly expressive carrier of the past and a medium of memory. Unfortunately, our interviewees did not recognize the people and places from Komańcza in the extensive collection of photographs.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN KOMAŃCZA

Komańcza is a large village located in Sanok district, Podkarpackie Voivodeship, and it is the seat of one of the largest rural municipalities in Poland. The municipality has 5,139 inhabitants, and the village of Komańcza itself has nearly 300 houses and 880 people live here.⁹ In 1946, Komańcza was left by the majority of its population, and in April of the following year all the inhabitants left it, with the exception of about 20 families employed on the railway and local Poles. The displaced persons found themselves mainly in the area of Paślęk and Bartoszyce. Many of them returned with their families after 1956, most often staying with other relatives living in Komańcza, in order to regain their former houses or build new ones. Today, Komańcza is inhabited by Lemkos, who escaped displacement or returned (not always from Komańcza, sometimes from the surrounding villages, e.g. Jawornik), and Poles, those who have been rooted here for many generations, as well as settlers and their descendants. There are two Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches in the village, as well as a Roman Catholic church.¹⁰

We started our research in Komańcza in February 2009. The subsequent stays took place in May and September of the same year and in May 2010. We directed our first steps to the local amateur historian in order to learn

⁹ <http://www.podkarpackie.powiaty.cba.pl/sanocki.htm> (access: 15.03.2011).

¹⁰ The building of the church located in the upper part of the village in 1961 was taken away by the then authorities from the Greek Catholics and reopened the following year as an Orthodox church. At that time, a dozen or so Komańcza families converted to Orthodoxy; the remaining majority used the Roman Catholic church until 1987, when the Greek Catholic church was opened – the only temple of this rite that had been erected even before the restitution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (Greek Catholic Church) in Poland in 1989. Currently, of other confessions, also few Jehovah's Witnesses live in Komańcza. A fire of an old Orthodox church on a hill in September 2006 was a shock for the village and the whole community. In October 2010, a solemn consecration of the temple, rebuilt with the efforts of many people and institutions, took place.

more about the possibilities of conducting our research, i.e. to find the people (or their descendants) whose names were on our list. Although we received a lot of erroneous information from him about the people enumerated on the list, he indicated the first few people on the list that we soon reached. We received similar directions from the head of the Komańcza commune and also the parish priest of the Greek Catholic parish and the parish priest of the Orthodox parish in Komańcza. One of the key interlocutors and experts in the history of the village and its inhabitants turned out to be a certain resident, who was able to say something about almost every family included in the IDO commission's lists, directing us to other interlocutors or telling us about the direction of a family's displacement. The latter information was particularly helpful to us when we were planning our stay in Ukraine, as it gave us an idea in advance of the number of families from Komańcza whom we could look for and whom we would certainly not find there anymore. In Ukraine, we found out that our informers did not avoid mistakes when giving us instructions, but this did not affect the results of the search, which in turn was due to the help of the local displaced persons.

Interestingly, many interlocutors in Komańcza directed us to a person who has a private mini museum and a Lemko embroidery workshop in her farm and is considered a specialist in the history of Komańcza. However, this person did not know anything about the German research of 1942, although in the opinion of the locals she is the guardian of the local memory, also known among tourists who willingly visit her to learn something about Lemkos in Komańcza.

Good knowledge of the local topography and toponymy also helped us to move around the village – it turned out that the inhabitants use such names of individual parts of Komańcza, which are not found on the map. These specific "districts" are defined from the direction of the pre-war migration or from the periods of post-war settlement and rural development. So, looking for specific persons, we found out that they lived "in France", "on the Washington street" or "near Vietnam".¹¹

"The Komańcza locals sent us to houses located in the area where there used to be a large group of families bearing the same name ("on Szariłka"), or in the direction leading to the neighbouring villages or further towns ("by the road to Prełuki", "as to Duszatyn", "to Wiśłok", "to Jawornik", "to

¹¹ A settlement of sawmill workers was established more or less at the time of the the Vietnam War. By analogy with another place in the Bieszczady Mountains with an identical "name" (a forest road by Smerek) it can be assumed that a distinctive symbol of the "end of the world" was meant.

Cisna”). By mastering local naming, we quickly became aware of the directions, and while talking to another person, we gained the approval of our mastery of space and of how we came to terms with it which helped us to gain the trust of our interlocutors. This was also due to the quick assimilation of family coligations and maiden names of many women. This information would also be useful for restoring the genealogy of the Komańcza families prior to the displacements.

We conducted the interviews in Polish, although we reached two elderly people who imposed Ukrainian in the conversation. We have been encountered a refusal several times, motivated by a reluctance to raise the issue of war. Although we strongly emphasized at the beginning which period of the war history of Komańcza we were interested in, a few people did not agree to the conversation, explaining that they did not intend to talk about their relatives living at that time. We interpret this as combining the whole period of the war with subsequent dramatic events and the participation of some of the villagers in the activities of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army,¹² to which, by the way, few of their descendants refer. We also noticed that a clear explanation to our interviewees that the matter concerned German research and early war years clearly convinced them that this was a topic they could feel safe with and that our research did not interfere in their most difficult memories from their own biographies or those of their loved ones, and that this allowed us to break the barrier of mistrust and reluctance. Our interlocutors were often positively surprised by the interest in the fate of their families and genealogy, and noticed that restoring the forgotten war theme could be important for the collective memory of the Komańcza people. However, apart from two people, no one suggested that we should look for other families in Ukraine, even if during our stay in the Tarnopol region and the Lviv region we learned that our informers from Komańcza were related to the interlocutors from Ukraine. This is a sign of the disappearance of family contacts, which was later confirmed by informers from Ukraine.

We conducted our research mainly in Komańcza; however, it was also necessary to visit neighbouring villages, such as Czystogarb, Radoszyce, Jawornik, Turzańsk, where descendants of people undergoing the IDO research in Komańcza live today. We conducted a total of 40 interviews, mainly with the oldest generation (70–90 years old), although there were also younger interlocutors if the oldest members of the family were already

¹² The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Polish abbreviation: UPA) was an Ukrainian armed resistance aiming at creating an independent state covering all ethnographically Ukrainian lands. On the territory of Poland UPA was active until 1947.

dead. The oldest of today's inhabitants of Komańcza, during the research carried out by the IDO commission, were from a few to 20 years old and remember the occupation period well.

The spouses of our informers often took part in the conversations and it turned out that their ancestors were also on the lists of the commission. The interviewees used family photo albums, showed us photographs of the examined subjects, often from the pre-war and war times, and from the last years of their lives. When verifying the data contained in the questionnaires, it sometimes turned out that the Section had made mistakes in filling them in. The most common mistakes concerned the year of birth, the number of children or the spelling of the surname, but as a rule all the data were correct. An interesting example of the evolution of this record was one of the Komańcza family names, which was written differently by the pre-war administration, differently by Germans in their Kennkarte IDs, still differently by the IDO Section, or by the post-war authorities, who "created" as many as three variants of this name, as a result of which each of the three brothers bore a different version of it, which could suggest that they belonged to different families.

The question about the work of the German commission usually brought up the story about the presence of the occupants in Komańcza – about how they treated the population, where they were staying and how they looked – and about the recruitment of young people for forced labor in Germany (together with the infamous activity of the then village leader Kałymun, called "the policeman") and about being drafted to the Red Army in the autumn of 1944. Often, these memories were accompanied by experiences related to the displacement to the north of Poland and return to Komańcza or to the avoidance of displacement. Less frequently did the interlocutors refer to contemporary life of the village, they practically did not touch the issue of the post-war conflict over the Orthodox church, bemoaning, on the other hand, its fire. Sometimes we sensed a clear aversion to some of the family members we were asking about, so family animosities often prevailed over the knowledge of their fate or the lack of it.

Significantly, apart from one of the interviewees, no one asked about the material value of the anthropological or sociological questionnaires concerning their ancestors or the farm, or about whether these documents could help recover the property seized during the displacement, particularly the forests.

Among the people we reached, there were three women who were examined by the committee. We were unable to talk to the oldest of them, who was over 100 years old, due to her health condition. The second woman in the study was 19 years old at the time of the surveys, i.e. one year too young to be on the list,

but she remembers the course of the study very well. Perhaps the staff of the Section realized that they had made a mistake and withdrew the person's name from the list and the results of their research on the personal questionnaire, as well as the questionnaire itself, which was not preserved in the Komańcza collection. The interviewee said that the research, which lasted one to two weeks, took place behind an inn near today's Eden bar. They were assisted by a Silesian, who interpreted into Polish. People were not photographed and blood was not collected. The commission registered mixed families and recruited forced labourers on the basis of the examinations.

The third of the women who was 21 in 1942 remembers the research, and her data can be found in the documentation. According to her, the research took place in the autumn of 1942 in a Jewish inn near the current bar called Eden bar. She remembers the date exactly, as a few months earlier she had given birth to twins. He also remembers that people were undressed and that a translator participated in the research, who translated into Polish the orders of doctors. Her sister, whom we found in Ukraine (but who was not indicated by her) and who was a few years younger, no longer remembers the examinations. In 1946 she was sent to the Tarnopol region and since then, apart from a few visits, which both elderly women had been unable to make for years due to health reasons, their contact has been limited to cards with wishes sent for holidays. We returned to our interlocutor in Komańcza with greetings from her sister and her photograph, which we took in Ukraine. Our research sometimes brought difficult and emotional situations, which were painful for our informants.

Memory of the research conducted by the IDO commission in Komańcza among the descendants of the people who were subjected to it is incomplete and inconsistent, and is also reserved for the older generation. Most of the younger people had not heard of them before, or had confined themselves to saying that ancestors had mentioned it, but neither had they made inquiries nor were told the details. In principle, our interviewees agreed on the time of the examinations – autumn 1942. However, it is not clear how the examined were told to appear before the IDO commission. One of the people said that the announcements were hung all over the village. There was no unanimity on the place where they took place – they were located in the former cooperative (a Ukrainian cooperative), a Jewish inn, the former school and a building across the river. Similarly, there was no consensus on the length of the commission's work (from two weeks to several months), on whether or not the photographs of the respondents were taken, on whether or not the results of the research were passed

to the public, or on the explanation of their purpose or grounds for summoning before the commission (one of the respondents suggested that the examined were qualified on the basis of the Kennkarte IDs, horses were taken away from them, and blonde men were selected after the examinations; another claimed that the Kennkarte IDs were made during the examinations). Only two people admitted that this topic was frequently mentioned at their home – one of them remembers an account that during the examinations, which took place entirely in Polish, the disabled were separated and then executed.

The aim of the research was often explained as proving the German roots. It seems to us that those who interpret it as research into the German roots of Komańcza's inhabitants or their belonging to the Nordic race – and we have heard this several times – are familiar with this goal of German anthropological research from later layers, readings, conversations, knowledge acquired from other sources, and that this is not a belief that emerged during the examinations, but a belief that it should be officially proclaimed among the villagers. Another interlocutor, who was 10 at the time of the study, remembers that it took place in a private building behind the Municipal Office, which had steam rooms and boilers for disinfecting clothes in order to eliminate typhoid and dysentery. During the examination, he was assisted by a doctor named Czaplik, and the population was given injections and ointments against fertility, but this was a privilege only for the selected few although in his opinion the examinations served to prevent fertility in general. Four or five representatives of the Aryan race were given better rights and ID cards. Allegedly there was a term for them – "szpic" (probably from the German word Spitz – KD).

Many inhabitants of Komańcza mention the fate of a certain gypsy family, which was subjected to examinations – but these did not show the "gypsy blood", which is why they survived the occupation in the village. The head of the family was a blacksmith who accepted the Ukrainian Kennkarte¹³ and, being an excellent craftsman, worked for the Germans. His daughter admitted during the interview that the whole family was undergoing examinations, and her mother remembered that everyone had his hair cut. She buried products that my father had received from the Germans (marmalade, bread, soap) because she feared that for accepting them they might be transported

¹³ In 1942, the German authorities began issuing the so-called identity cards (Kennkarte) to the German inhabitants of GG over 15 years of age. Depending on the nationality, they differed in colour and, in the case of non-Polish people, in the letter marking: Jews (J) and Gypsies (Z) had yellow cards, Russians (R), Ukrainians (U), Belarusians (W), Georgians (K) and highlanders (G) had blue cards; Poles had identity cards in grey. The Kennkarte contained the fingerprint of the middle finger of both hands (Szarota 1988: 34–35).

to a concentration camp. After the Russians came to the village, her father worked on the railway. They tried to recruit him to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. If he declined, he and his whole family were to be threatened with death. At the same time, they did not want to go to the Soviet Union, so still before the "Vistula" action the blacksmith fled to Zagórze, where after two or three weeks his family joined him and from there they left for the regained western lands. They returned to Komańcza in the early 1950s.

The mother-in-law of the farmer remembered the examinations. At the age of 12, she was involved in those events. As she said, when her parents were summoned to the cooperative building (later the People's House), she looked after her siblings in their absence and "it dragged on". She suggested that the study included 10 households per day and the selected were subjected to examinations for 2 days for two hours. Eye colour and body build were examined, jaws were measured, hair samples were taken, teeth were counted. In the opinion of the interlocutor some specialists were coming to the village, doctors of various specializations, but she could not determine their nationality. The meeting with the doctors was difficult: "Mum was very surprised, for the first time such tests were carried out, they had to undress. That was particularly a problem for women because they measured their breasts and examined their pubic hair". The Germans treated the subjects well and were to openly announce the purpose of the research. A "policeman" was walking around the village, he had a list of people and summoned them for a specific day and time, and "whoever was on the list had to go". She claims that sociological questionnaires were filled in otherwise. The farmer went to the village head, gave the number of hectares, the livestock and the quantity of the produced grain, potatoes and milk, and a quota was calculated on this basis. The interviewee suggested that perhaps similar data were collected from the farmers appearing before the medical commission, "because they did go to people's homes". In her opinion, the section looking for "people of their origin" proved the German roots to two families from Komańcza, who were to be offered a trip to Silesia to work in the mine, which exempted them from delivering the quota. However, they did not agree and had to deliver the mandatory quotas on an equal terms as the rest of the residents. The interviewee also stressed that the research had to show who had "Italian, Turkish and Tartar blood", and that after six months or a year the population was obliged to go to school or to the village leader to collect the results. It turned out that the results of the informer's mother were extremely good. The results of the research were widely discussed in the village. The interlocutor admits, however, that there is no talk of the examinations in Komańcza today.

THE INHABITANTS OF KOMAŃCZA IN UKRAINE

The inhabitants of Komańcza were taken to Soviet Ukraine in June 1946. Like other displaced persons, they were to occupy the houses abandoned by Poles leaving for Poland. Families deported to eastern Ukraine were a small group among all those who were forced to leave Komańcza. Most of the people were placed in the two western districts of the USSR. We went there too.

We started our research in Ukraine in October 2009 with a library and archive query. We conducted our research in the Lviv Research Library of the W. Stefanyk National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU) and its branches, in the NASU's Library of the Institute of Nationality Studies and the Institute itself, the Library of the National I. Franko Lviv University, the Chair of Ethnology of this university, the Lviv District Medical Library and the State Archives of the Lviv District. During the meetings with the management and employees of these institutions, we found out that the topic of the IDO research in the Lemko region is not known to them, and that the indicated institutions do not have any materials that might be important for our research. However, the queries in the library catalogues brought some clues about the Ukrainian- and German-language texts on physical anthropology published during the war in Germany (e.g. Jordan 1940; Jendyk 1949; Fischer 1941). However, we have not found any direct references to the IDO work.

In February 2010 we went to the Tarnopol region, where we were directed during the research in Komańcza. First of all, we arrived in two villages where the former Komańcza inhabitants lived. We received a lot of information from the activists of the "Lemkivshchyna" (The Lemko land) Society, who were very interested in the subject of our research. The reconnaissance in the field gave us an idea of the extent of the displacement. We reached the villages of Drakhanivka, Slavne, Khorodyshche, Khutory, Kozliv. In each of these villages, we met with one or two families from Komańcza. We were also directed to other places, we were supposed to reach only in the next phase of our research in August and September 2010. We visited Khorodyshche and Kozliv once again in August of the same year; further meetings were also held in Tarnopol. The visit to the village of Mala Berezowycia, where many displaced persons from Komańcza arrived, who only from there headed for the Lviv District, turned out to be particularly interesting. With time, however, the village became deserted, so during our research we reached only two people from Komańcza. Our presence at the Lemko festival "The Bells of the Lemko Land", which takes place every year in Monastyriska, turned out to be fruitful. During the event, the audience was informed

from the stage about our stay and the research that we conduct; as a result, displaced persons from the vicinity of Komańcza and younger “Lemko *Watra* participants”, who remembered that someone of their relatives descended from that village, came to visit us.

Thereafter we went to Lviv, where we participated in the meeting of the Lviv branch of the “Lemkyvshchyna” Society, during which the issue of our research was also raised. The heads and activists of the local divisions who participated in the meeting recognised the importance of this project. Thanks to them, we were able to clarify in which other places in the Lviv region displaced persons from Komańcza should be found. The last stage of our activities began with our participation in the Lemko culture festival in Nakhirne near Sambor (September 4–5, 2010). After the announcement, two people from Biskovytychi – displaced persons from Komańcza – appeared under the stage. The village of Biskovytychi is inhabited by displaced persons from Poland, including several families from Komańcza. We have been able to meet most of these people. The final phase of the research was a visit to the village of Velyki Khlibovytychi, where we found the largest group of people coming from Komańcza. In total, in the Lviv and Tarnopol regions, we conducted 30 interviews and several shorter interviews with the displaced persons from Komańcza or their descendants. Most of these meetings were of an individual nature, there were also conversations in groups or during the interview someone from the household or a neighbour joined the conversation.

The memory of the racial research conducted in Komańcza in 1942 has hardly survived. Only a few people claimed that they remember personally or from their parents’ accounts the fact that the inhabitants were summoned to a medical commission (“There was something like that...”) or they associated the purpose of these examinations with the commission’s search for German roots or “predispositions” to belong to the Aryan race. It is difficult to say though to what extent these memories are related to the IDO research itself and to what extent to other activities of the occupant.¹⁴ As we have already written, from several people we have heard that the medical examinations were conducted in a school and that the population of the village received injections. The names of the following doctors were mentioned: Hrab (who was in Komańcza before the war) and Romaniuk, but it’s hard to tell anything

¹⁴ During the occupation, stocktaking actions in villages were carried out on numerous occasions, the results of which were not only used for statistics. For example, in 1940 the land registration data served as a basis for the calculation of the quota (Landau 1962, Vol. 1: 610) and in 1943 a separate stocktaking of cattle, vegetable crops, horses, etc. took place (Landau 1962, Vol. 2: 409, 413, 470). On March 1, 1943, the occupant conducted a census in the GG (Landau 1962, Vol. 2: 228, 237).

about their ties with the IDO commission.¹⁵ One of the interlocutors said she remembered her parents going somewhere where hair was being cut and maybe also photos taken. However, as a rule our interlocutors associated the topic of the German racial research with the recruitment of the people of Komańcza to forced labor in Germany or the issuing of Kennkarte IDs for them.

In most cases, the question we asked about our research triggered the story of the war in general and the events that took place in Komańcza, and, above all, the stories of displacement. We learned about the fate of individual family members and other relatives by referring to German questionnaires and verifying the data contained in the documents on the basis of the knowledge of the interlocutor. We followed genealogies that supplemented our knowledge gained in Komańcza and they sometimes created a sequence that helped to reconstruct the family relationships of the Komańcza inhabitants in general. It was much easier to follow the genealogy and identify people with similar names on German lists because of the widespread use of the *po bat'kowi* form (Russian: *otchestvo*).

Our interviewees talked about displacement and life in Ukraine, they also remembered Komańcza, shared their impressions from the journey (many of them visited their native village in the recent years), outlined perspectives for people coming from the Lemko region today and talked with hope about children who still want to listen to the stories about the fate of the Lemkos.

DESCENDANTS OF THE KOMAŃCZA INHABITANTS WORLDWIDE

After placing an announcement on two popular international Lemko websites (lemko.org and lemky.com),¹⁶ we received many letters from the descendants of people born in Komańcza, who after World War II and the displacements of 1944–1947 found themselves in the north of Poland, in Ukraine, France and the United States. These are descendants of the second or third generation who, referring to their Komańcza roots, provide us with valuable knowledge about the later fate of the inhabitants, although they know little of the IDO research itself. Such letters are still coming in.

¹⁵ Their names are not included in the lists of persons cooperating with IDO – cf. Rybicka 2002: 165–173.

¹⁶ This was possible thanks to the kindness and benevolent interest in our research shown by the authors of these portals: Walter Maksymowycz, a descendant of displaced Lemkos, who lives in Miami, and was born in Lubin near Legnica, and Jarosław Tepły, a descendant of the former inhabitants of Besko, who currently lives in Żytomierz.

CONCLUSIONS

Our research on memory of the work of the IDO Section in Komańcza in 1942, conducted over a long period of time and covering a vast geographical area, revealed many inconsistencies and divergent interpretations, formulated by the inhabitants of Komańcza and displaced persons from this village living in Ukraine. The way we worked differed significantly: while in Komańcza we conducted our research on a stationary basis, for many weeks, several times visiting the same place and sometimes visiting our interlocutors twice, in the Tarnopol region and Lviv region the meetings with displaced persons were of one-off and incidental nature. In Komańcza, after some time we were recognized in an Orthodox church, in a shop, near the Municipal Office, whereas in Ukraine, we appeared unexpectedly, and soon after the conversation we disappeared. Due to the necessity of constant mobility, we did not stay in any village for any longer period of time. Nevertheless, we observed a great involvement of Lemkos in our research, quick organizing and informing each other about our visit. The Lemkos in Ukraine, to a much greater extent than in Komańcza, noticed the importance of research into the history of the Lemkos, which seems to be connected with the discourse about the past prevailing in that group. The Komańcza people in Ukraine nurture memories of the former Lemko region with greater attention than the contemporary inhabitants of Komańcza. We observed many times that our interlocutors were extremely interested in everything we brought with us from Komańcza – the information about the contemporary topography, the fate of the younger generations of inhabitants, news about the fire and reconstruction of the “Horbek” Orthodox church. They were very attentive to the land of their fathers and proved that everything related to the memory of the former Lemko region was important not only to them, but also to their descendants.

The attitude towards us as people “from there”, i.e. from Poland, closely related to the place important to them, was mostly enthusiastic. The interviewees, and above all the activists, treated our work with great attention, we did not encounter any disregard for research or any questioning of the importance of “un-forgetting” the past of Lemkos from Komańcza. They saw our efforts first of all as important, even more important to and for them than for research itself and for our, researchers’ scientific benefits. For this reason, we perceive research in Ukraine as methodologically more complex, but also as more interesting than in Komańcza itself.

Common to both areas of research was the accumulation of projections in the narrative about the Komańcza’s wartime past. Both among

today's inhabitants of this village who returned from their displacements which took place within the "Vistula" action, and the displaced persons in Ukraine the later dramatic experiences of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict, the activities of the UPA, and finally the forced displacement to Ukraine and the northern lands of Poland, obliterated the memory of the German occupation itself and the events that accompanied it. As a rule, the period of World War II was reduced in the interviewees' memories to the fear of being deported to forced labour in Germany, to the necessity of giving up the quota and the spectre of hunger, to the fear of the Ukrainian police, who was not gracious to the local Lemkos, but also to the possibility of receiving education in Ukrainian, which has always been appreciated positively by our interlocutors. Memories or knowledge of the next generation about this period show a mixture of several threads, which in our opinion overlap with the work of the IDO Commission, because they partly associate the medical examinations with recruitment to forced labour in Germany, the issuing of the Kennkarte IDs for the population, or prevention of infectious diseases, such as typhus and dysentery. Before they were sent to the Reich, forced laborers were subjected to examinations (Madańczyk 1970: 642, 646), but our interviewees often linked this topic with the outcome of the examinations or its basis. Combating infectious diseases, on the other hand, especially typhoid fever, was a routine, mass practice of the occupation authorities (e.g. Polubiec 1970: 277–278; Landau 1962, Vol. 1: 696–697).¹⁷ Thus, the interference of these threads and their connection with separate activities for strictly racial research may indicate that the occupation period in the memory of Lemkos, living both in Komańcza and Ukraine, was condensed to some extent to several facts and practices imposed by the occupant, while what happened after the war front passed, was to change their fate forever, and therefore in the memory of the members of these communities occupies a far more important place, leaving behind the earlier events ("Under the Germans... yes, under the Germans... but when they displaced us..."). What is more, the repeated returns to the pre-displacement Lemkovshchyna (The Lemko land) – real or imaginary – many conversations with the locals, readings, visits to Lemko festivals, the content of which is saturated with the directive to spin stories about the past and the necessity to remember in order to preserve the individual and collective identity caused that this period, repeatedly reworked in the memory of the Komańcza inhabitants dominated other

¹⁷ In 1943, compulsory annual vaccination against typhoid was ordered for the entire population. See Landau 1962, Vol. 2: 176.

recollections. It can also be assumed that the work of the IDO Section and its effects, being much less severe for the people being the subject under study have been superseded by truly dramatic events. Another issue is the impact of our research on the villages we visit and the interviewees themselves. Komańcza as an attractive village from the point of view of research is often chosen by sociologists and ethnologists due to the Lemko population that has always resided here and the returns of a large number of representatives from the north of Poland. The town is also visited by numerous groups of students, mainly from Cracow and Katowice, but also from Rzeszów. The sight of visitors is not an unfamiliar sight to the inhabitants of Komańcza – it is a tourist destination and boasts a growing tourist infrastructure, it is willingly visited “on the way” to the Bieszczady Mountains. The villages of Tarnopol and Lviv, where we arrived, look different. Many of them are located far from the main routes. While moving around the area we were interested in, we noticed that the sight of a stranger arouses curiosity and apparently does not occur in those areas every day. The villages we reached and where displaced people from Poland live have so far not been the subject of research by Polish¹⁸ or Ukrainian researchers. While the inhabitants of Komańcza are familiar with the person of a researcher, the visit of an ethnologist to Ukraine is a unique event for the inhabitants. Especially if a Pole who visits them speaks their language (and not only understands), has at his disposal documents which contain data about their ancestors, and knows Komańcza better than the interlocutors themselves. When discussing the content of the questionnaires, it was incomprehensible for several of our interviewees that commission wrote down the confession of their ancestors as Greek Catholic. Since they themselves could only be Orthodox during the communist years, they often continue to profess this religion to this day. They have often expressed amazement that their parents have been saved as Greek Catholics, since they always told them that they were Orthodox. Sometimes we also heard the indignation that there was a serious mistake in the questionnaires, because all the inhabitants of Komańcza were Orthodox before being displaced. Such a situation was difficult for us methodologically, but we

¹⁸ Mirosław Pecuch, the only ethnologist from Poland who conducted field research among Ukrainian Lemkos, focused on villages in eastern and southern Ukraine, and in the western part he reached villages in the Tarnopol and Lviv districts (including Tchortkov, Monastyryska, Pustyty), which in turn were not included in our research map. Cf. Pecuch 2009: 12–15; Jacek Nowak’s research in the village of Kukilnyki, in the Ivano-Frankivsk division, having a far narrower scope, focused on the issue of involvement in religious practices and ways of dealing with the legacy of communism (cf. Nowak 2003: 210–225).

decided not to emphasize the difference between the two religions and not to instruct our interlocutors "how it really was". Of course, they were wrong,¹⁹ but the reason for this may be because of their parents' strategy of protecting their children and minimising the harassment the displaced persons were threatened by anyway in the first years of their stay in Soviet Ukraine. Since the Greek Catholic Church could not exist legally in the USSR, passing on memories of their real confession in Komańcza to the children could have exposed them to discrimination.

Taking the above into account, as well as the fact that our interlocutors were communicating with each other, one led us to another, and certainly after our visit its purpose and course was discussed, at least where the Komańcza people live in a larger group. In Komańcza, the research did not cause such a resonance, but due to the originality of the research topic – we were not simply another researcher exploring the issue of religion or national identity – and the fact that we bring information about their ancestors and documents concerning them, it seems they have not gone unnoticed.

It is interesting how our research will affect further research projects that will be undertaken both in Komańcza and among the former Komańcza inhabitants living now in Ukraine.

¹⁹ Before World War II there was no Orthodox parish in Komańcza, and there were no Orthodox believers.

